

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

Protecting the safety of children by preventing childhood lead poisoning is a top priority. Given my concern, I am signing Assembly Bill 121 to help protect our children, particularly Latino children, from exposure to lead in candy.

While this measure is a significant step forward, I am concerned that the standards it calls for will be difficult to implement and that its regulatory approach is not as effective and timely as our children deserve.

Therefore, I am directing the Department of Health Services to: (1) adopt a standard for lead in candy that is more protective than the current United States Food and Drug Administration level of 0.5 parts per million and that can be more effectively implemented than a standard based on naturally occurring levels; (2) work with the author and stakeholders on follow-up legislation that provides a targeted, effective approach to protecting our children, that tackles the problem at its source, prevents lead in candy through improved manufacturing and packaging practices, and complements testing of candies sold in the U.S.; (3) Partner with Mexican government officials and the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission in binational efforts to reduce lead in candy; and (4) increase bilingual lead poisoning prevention educational efforts that include discussion of lead in imported candy.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger